

# Movie Makers

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The American Motion Picture Society

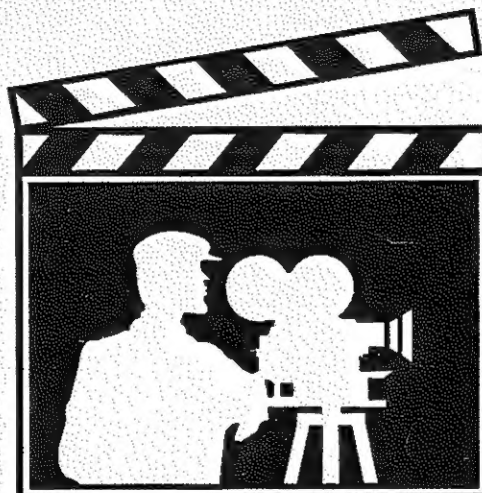
## *A Brief History of the Festival*

George W Cushman.

**T**he American International Film/Video Festival is the oldest film festival in the world. It dates from 1930. There were at least two film festivals (or competitions as they were called in those days) that began a few years prior to that date, both sponsored by motion picture fan magazines. But after a few years both were discontinued.

The Amateur Cinema League was formed about 1926 and in that year began publishing their monthly magazine, *Movie Makers*. Four years later, in their December 1930 magazine, they listed what they called the ten best films they had seen that year. The list became known as the "Ten Best" and because it was so popular with the movie making public, especially members of the League, the competition was continued, the list of the Ten Best winners appearing annually in the League's December issue.

From the very first, members wanted to see the winning films, and they were shown in the New York area, the League's head-



quarters. In time the requests for showing were so numerous that the League began making copies of the winners and sending them on circuits throughout the country.

The League recognized two classes of films, those made by laymen who shot for the fun of it, and others made by semi-professionals produced commercially under a grant. As early as 1936, the League included com-

mercial films in the Top Ten along with non-commercial entries. But objections from League members caused the League to discontinue this policy. Thus after 1948, only non-commercial films were listed in the Top Ten. Since that time non-commercial films have been referred to as Class A, while commercially made films have a different designation, usually Class C.

In 1954, the League experienced financial difficulties, and the result was a take over of the league by the Motion Picture Division of the Photographic Society of America. This new sponsor was eager to continue the competition and began with the 26<sup>th</sup> Ten Best in 1955. No changes were made in the procedure, the competition remained the same.

The Society held the gala premiere screening of each year's winners at their annual international convention, held in various cities in the USA and Canada. Following the convention the films were duplicated and sent to clubs and other groups around the country.  
*(Continued on Page 4)*

**inside...**

**A Testament from a Super 8 Film maker  
No Control  
Production Book**

**page 3  
page 4  
page 5**

## Movie Makers

Dedicated to the interests of the Serious Motion Picture Maker.

**Vol. 9 November-December, 1999  
No. 6**

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**George W. Cushman  
Founder,  
1909-1996**

Matt Jenkins, Editor

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## From the Editor

**T**his is the last issue of Movie Makers for the year, century and millennium.

Do I have something profound to say at this momentous occasion? Probably not. It is interesting to look back over the history of the moving picture. While in its infancy a hundred years ago, moving pictures have been and continue to be a major influence on our lives.

Children eat while watching "Gilligan's Island," go to bed after "The Brady Bunch" and so on. We can't wait to see a certain release on video. And, for about a hundred years, people have paid good money to sit in a dark room, with people they don't know and watch a flickering light on a wall...

Even more amazing are the technological advances. Evolution from a hand cranked silent camera using a volatile explosive film stock, to palm-corders and video recorded on CD. We receive signals from antenna, fiber, satellite and cable. A long way from a flickering light on a wall. Yet there is still an attraction for going to the movies.

Editing has gone from the physical labor of cutting and gluing long ribbons of celluloid to using a virtual razor to cut a virtual picture on a virtual editor.

While it took about 50 years for TV to have a golden era, it has only taken 15 years to really put good quality looking video production into the hands of the av-

erage person.

Impressive changes occurred over the past 100 years. Do I have any predictions for video/film production in the age of 2,000? Of course!

- Down loadable broadcast quality programming will be a reality. Of course it will be for a fee. And traditional program services will adapt to this method of program delivery.

- There will be an increased demand for programs and low budget produced programs.

Anything else? I don't know, its too early in the morning.

I've seen the winner's reel from the last festival and its terrific! Of course I have opinions about each one and could spend all day talking about them. But I do have one concern. The use of copyrighted music and/or images without permission can be a major headache (Movie Maker's March - April, 1999.) If you use other's work, please have written permission. AMPS would like to make copies and distribute the winners reel but can't if there are copyright infringements. So please make sure you sign the copyright statement on the entry and be sure to have written permission!

I would like to see more articles about other festivals in Movie Makers. If any AMPS member knows of any other festivals to put the spot light on, let me know.

Matt Jenkins



# A Testament from a Super 8 Film maker

Melinda Stone  
Entranced by film

I was introduced to the possibility of film making in 1992 during my first year of graduate school at the University of California, San Diego. I met Professors and artists who introduced me to the world of avant-garde experimental film making, which completely altered my view of what was possible in the world of film. I saw films that were lyrical, poetic, touching, sometimes aggravating, individualized creations that did not seem to fit a mold or have a particular genre style.

I found myself particularly drawn to films that seemed to do with just a little, notably Super 8 films. I liked the grainy image, the evocative intimate portraits, and the camp.

**If it can't be done, do it yourself.**

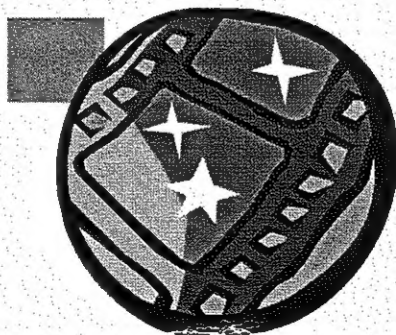
I wanted to see more, but whenever I asked anyone about contemporary Super 8 film making, I was told that Super 8 was dead. Super 8 cameras and projectors were no longer made, Kodak was discontinuing film stocks, processing labs were difficult to locate, and screening venues were not interested. But I did not despair.

I figured the only way to locate new Super 8 work was to instigate a film festival dedicated to this smallest gauge. Thus the

Super Super 8 Film Festival was born.

## How I did it

I made posters, contacted sponsors (super 8 labs and film supply stores), placed ads in film magazines, and sent out post cards around the world soliciting Super 8 entries. Much to the surprise of the skeptics, over 200 entries were received in the first year of the festival. There were documentaries, animated shorts, home movies, comedies, experimental pieces, narratives, and many that defied categorization. They were amazing in their own unique way, and ten were selected by judges to tour the country. The festival is now in its third year. This year we plan to travel around the world with Super 8 2000 - The World Tour.



## A unique festival

It is our festival tradition to offer live musical accompaniment to silent films in the tradition of travelogue presenters and home movie screenings. Because I enjoy this presentation/performance style so much, which is never the same twice due to improvisation and chance, I wanted other film makers to have the opportunity to

experiment with it. Each year, at least five film makers request live music and/or narration for their entries. This is generously provided at each venue by a local musical group. One month prior to the tour, the musicians in each town are given a video copy of the silent films and any musically inclined directions furnished by the film maker. The scores they produce and play live with the films are extraordinary and unique, providing a truly magical and inspiring experience.

## Fun and games, too

I have learned much from years of screenings that projectors, sound systems and film prints are not 100% reliable. There is nothing more frustrating than waiting for the projectionist to repair a broken splice, change a bulb, or fix an impedance problem. To alleviate the monotony and tension of such situations, the Super Super 8 film festival plays BINGO. Audience members receive a BINGO card as they enter the event and BINGO numbers are announced throughout the evening. Winners receive Super 8 cameras, projectors and film stock. This game is entertaining, and the prizes ensure that Super 8 film making will continue.

This year we are looking forward to touring the world with wonderfully inventive and captivating small movies.

# No Control

No. 5 - March 1992

George Cushman

**N**o matter how good a motion picture you may have made, when it comes to entering a competition, there are many factors over which you have no control.

It would be proper to say lady Luck takes over when the judging begins.

The judges may assemble several evenings in a row, from about 7 to 11, or they may go the week-end route, Saturday morning through Sunday night, continuing the following weekend if necessary.

Let's start with the evening sessions. Your movie arrived early, is shown fourth on the first evening. The judges are still awake, receive your entry favorably, all is well.

Or, your picture is shown close to 11 PM. The judges are tired, their eyes are weary, they want to go home. "Let's hurry up on this last one." And their mind is not on your masterpiece. All is not well.

You have a fair to good travelog. The judges see three excellent travelogs, then yours comes along. "What, another travelog?" Yours, by comparison, doesn't fare too well. OR, yours is preceded by three pretty sad travelogs. Then comes yours, a welcome relief. By comparison it is well received.

'Tis a week-end session, the final Sunday night. It is late, the judges are itching to go home. "One last picture," says the chairman. It is yours. With one eye closed the judges look at your work. Half way through they call out "Cut it, we've seen enough." Will they remember your picture when the voting starts?

One judge recognizes your name on the credits as the producer. He has seen your work before. He tells the other judges you do real good work. "Hey, this is not up to this guy's previous pictures. He has really slipped on this one." Of course the judge has NO RIGHT to compare your current picture with what you have done in the past, but that happens.

The screenings are over, the judges confer. Some have your picture rated among the top, others do not. They haggle: "O.K., you vote Smith's picture and I'll vote for the one you like." Fair? But that's the way it goes sometimes.

Often there will be one dominant judge who talks loud and long. He may tend to sway the other the judges. If he likes your picture, he may argue for it, or vice versa. Some judges may argue with him, most won't. He carries such a big stick, and he shouldn't, but it works that way sometimes.

If the discussion is friendly, the voting may be verbal, but if a heated argument erupts, then the jurors go to a secret ballot. Occasionally a tie vote occurs and a wild debate may ensue with neither side giving an inch. This can result in a second rate picture being selected as a compromise, thus two much better pictures losing out because of the battle, and one just might be yours.

All you can do is hope Lady Luck had your picture in her hand. If she did, you may win. If not, well, as we said at the start of this series, it's a lot like a ball game, you win a few, you lose a few.



(Continued from Page 1)

In 1962 the "Ten Best" became known officially as the American International Film Festival and continued under that title until the 80's when movies on video were being entered. At that time the word "video" was added to the official title. Pictures on video tape have been eligible since that time providing they meet the requirements and limitations of film entries.

Entrants began to object to college students being allowed to enter their work in Class A. It was felt that students had an unfair advantage with the help of their college teachers and elaborate equipment to use. As a result, student made entries were judged in a separate class, known as Class B. Thus no picture made by a college student could be a "Ten Best." Other classifications have been used at times.

The Motion Picture Division of the Photographic Society held their last competition and festival screening in 1990. The members appeared to lack any enthusiasm or interest in continuing the festival. As a result, the American Motion Picture Society was formed the following year for the purpose continuing the "Ten Best." Their sponsorship began with the 62<sup>nd</sup> screening in 1981. The same traditions have been followed and the "Ten Best" remains today as much as it did when it started back in the 1930's.

The procedure over the years has changed very little. A date is set for receiving entries. Then judging begins using a panel of three or

(Continued on Page 6)

## A Production Book

Matt Jenkins

**H**aving just finished an eleven minute documentary, *The Passing of Time*, I was excited to learn that our state public broadcasting service decided to air it as a part of a larger show. Do you have clearances and proof of clearances for the material in the documentary? I was asked.

As I thumbed through the program's production book...Wait, what's a production book? Glad you asked.

I create a production book as the program is being produced.

It contains all the important documentation that goes along with a program. Professional producers keep track of releases and clearances for: actors, phonographs, music, literary works, locations, logos, groups, names, videos, film clips and so on. Also kept are scripts, budget, insurance, set designs, equipment lists, screen actor's guild forms, call sheets, breakdown sheets, Director's Guild of America sheets, writer's agreements...Hold on a minute. I just shoot simple little videos. I don't need all that stuff. You are partly right, you don't need ALL of this information, but if you plan to enter your video into festivals or to have it shown in a public venue, then you should keep track certain information dealing with your video. Lets look at the *Passing of Time's* book. It contains the final script which can be copied to

a copyright application. It also contains a budget sheet. This documentary's budget was \$554 dollars. I had to account for my spending so a budget was the only way to go.

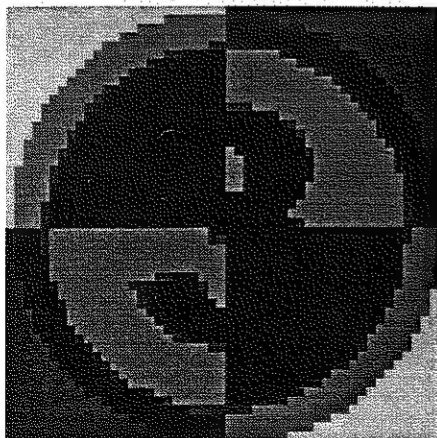
The book contains performance releases and location agreements. These are essential when using other people as actors, narrators, or participants. These releases give you written permission to show the video anywhere you want. *The Passing of Time* contains selected passages from magazines. I have written permission from the magazine publishers to use these passages in this documentary.

The production book also has a distribution section. Besides the state public broadcasting system  
*(Continued on Page 6)*

Visit AMPS online at:

[www.cameron.edu/~mattj/page8.html](http://www.cameron.edu/~mattj/page8.html)

Please consider this to be a sample page. Your comments and suggestions are welcome. Yes it is an odd address but again this is a sample page.



## Do you want to see the AMPS Winner's Reel?

For those of you who would like to see the winning entries of the recently completed Festival, a tape including all of the ten winning videos is available for \$8 including shipping.

Foreign requests for the tape will be \$10 due to the increased cost of postage.

Mail your request to Roger Garretson. His address is on page two of the newsletter.





# Upcoming Festivals

Close Date	Festival Name & Address for forms	Open to:	Subject	Formats	Time Limit	Entry Fee	Award	Show Dates
1-17-2000	Movie 2000-IAC Int'l Film & Video Festival 24c West St., Epsom, Surrey KT18 7RJ England e-mail: iacfilmvideo@compuserve.com	ABG	G	HJKMN OP vhs pal ntsc dv(pal)	30MIN	£9 amateur £12 non amateur	UW	Mar 24-26 Palace Hotel Buxton, Derbyshire
4-15-2000	Cotswold Int'l Film&Video Festival C.I.F.V.F., 37, Canberra, Stonehouse Gloucestershire, GL10 2PR England e-mail leepres@anglovideogxy.demon.co.uk	ABG	G	HJKMN Pal or NTSC P Pal only	20 MIN	Y	T UV	Stroud, Gloucester- shire, England
N/A Not Announced or Not Available Please include a self addressed stamped envelope with your entry request								
A Non Commercial B College Student C Hi Sch Gr Sch	D Independant E Commercial F Restricted	G Open H S8 J 16mm	K Other L 3/4" M VHS	N SVHS O 8mm P Hi8	Q Invitat'l R Regional S Exceptions	T Cash U Trophies V Certificate	W Other Award X Approximate Y It Varies	

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I have entered it into several festivals. I like to keep track of which festivals its been in.

The last section is for such miscellaneous things as notes and sketches that deal with the documentary.

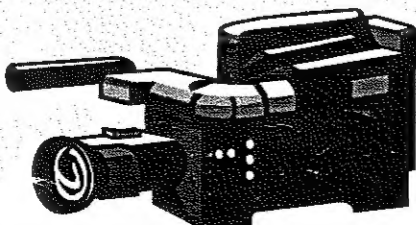
Still, you say, I don't even spend 50 dollars on my projects, I only plan to show it to friends."

That's fine but why limit yourself? What if it is the best production you ever created and almost for sure to win in competition? You still need permission to use other's likenesses and so on. Its better to be prepared then not to be able to use your

project the way you want. So at the very least have all your actors sign a release and keep them with a copy of the script. If you are going to use copyrighted material then get written permission for that as well.

Keep all the information in a three ring binder and dedicate a portion of your bookcase of your book case in which to keep these books for your productions.

And then go and show your video.



(Continued from Page 4)

more judges. If more than 100 entries are received, it is customary to pre-screen them, sending the best 40 or so to a final jury.

The Ten Best pictures make up the list, followed, usually, by a few non-orable mentions. Special awards have varied over the years, some have been sponsored awards, resulting in trophies given the recipient during the festival screenings by the trophy sponsors. Cash awards have been given in a few instances.

# Convention Update

## The Presidents Report AMPS/Ten Best of the West Convention

The AMPS/Ten Best of the West convention was a smashing success. Even though the numbers attending the convention were few, a great time was had by all. There over 30 people in attendance. Five were walk ins. Nine came from the LA Cinema Club. A great showing from one club.

We watched 65 movies, 52 were entries and 13 were "Anything Goes" movies, those that were not entered in the contests. There was not a bad one in the lot. We had four good presentations, one on scripting by Connie Wilkerson, a production manager in the film making department at the University of Utah. She shared with us the idea that our video stories can be either plot driven or character driven; travelogues should have narrated background information rather than just "this is the Eiffel Tower" or "this is the train I took to Berlin. Tell something about the how high and why the tower was built. When did the Berlin wall come down so that the train from West to East could run again. She also suggested stories should have 3 parts; problem, complication and resolution.

Richard Chesley, a 13 year old, gave us a great presentation on Claymation. A person grew out of a lump of clay using just his camcorder and a lot of patience. No computer effects.

David McNeill showed us how to edit with just a camcorder and a VCR, while Jim Beach impressed us with his digital computer.

Brian Gubler taped and edited, in Camcorder, a Family Personal History of a famous (really) portrait artist, Cloy Kent. We understand this is now making the rounds in Salt Lake City with very favorable reviews.

Saturday evening ended with two hours of accordion music, during dinner by John Tibolla, who would give Lawrence Welk a run for his money.

A seven minute movie, "I Want My Rib" was made in a two hour period using convention attendees as actors, who were paid 100 Thousand for their acting skills. Pretty good compensation, wouldn't you say, for two hours work? It was edited over night and presented the next day. It was a lot of fun.

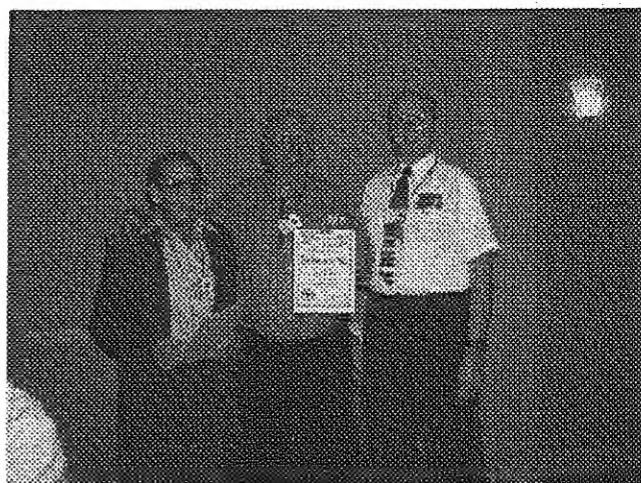
There were NO vendors hawking their wares this year. A very pleasant change. The convention was just good movies, good food and good friends. You who missed it, missed a very good convention. It was a smashing success.

Ernest





L.A. Cinema Club winners



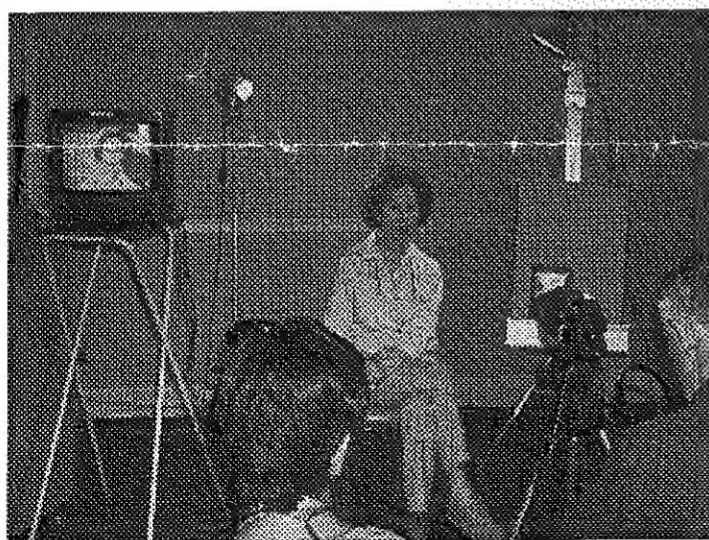
Jerry Turk, TBW winner



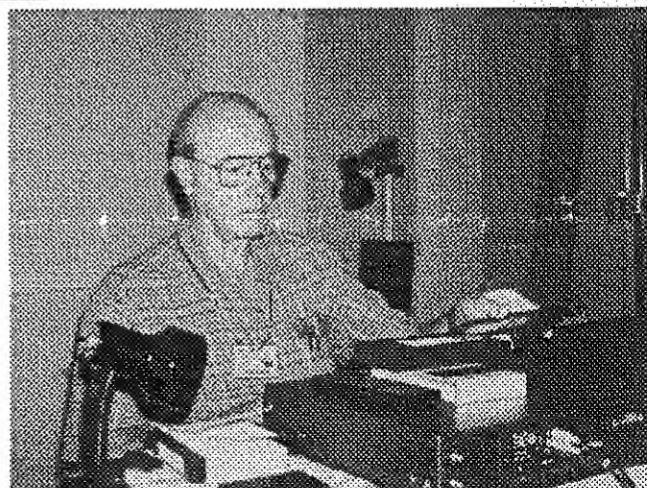
l-r Hattie Beach, Jim Beach, Ernest Smith



And we ate-----



Cloy Kent in a Family History Demonstration



David McNeil operated all the projectors



*The*

# AMERICAN INTERNATIONAL FILM & VIDEO FESTIVAL



*70TH Consecutive Competition*

## **1999 FESTIVAL WINNERS**

### **CLASS A (Amateur)**

#### **FIRST PLACE "The Cracked Pot"**

By James (Jim) Beach, Van Nuys, CA

#### **SECOND PLACE "Feelings"**

by Carroll Lam, Tucson, AZ

#### **THIRD PLACE "Together on the Reef"**

By Jean Slosberg, Pompano Beach, FL

### **THE TEN BEST (in alphabetical order)**

"ALIENS IN THE ATTIC" by David Cockley, Cleveland, OH

"BEACH RICH? FISH POOR!" by Art Nelson, Oakhurst, NJ

"DOSE OF FAULTS" by Stoke Cine & Video Society, Staffordshire, England

"FEELINGS" by Carroll Lam, Tucson, Tucson, AZ

"KENNEDY PARK" by "Unknown Artists" Maxwell, Texas

"MEALS ON WHEELS" by Roger Garretson, Oak Park, CA

"OUT OF CONTEXT" by Jack Somers, Los Angeles, CA

"THE CRACKED POT" by James (Jim) Beach, Van Nuys, CA

"THE MAGIC SKATEBOARD" by Lee Prescott, Gloucestershire, England

"TOGETHER ON THE REEF" by Jean Slosberg, Pompano Beach, FL

### **THE SPECIAL AWARDS**

The Stuart Dabbs Memorial Award sponsored by Rose Dabbs for the Most Creative Picture

"THE CRACKED POT" by James (Jim) Beach

The Best Story Award sponsored by Irene Lewis-Haag

"ALIENS IN THE ATTIC" by David Cockley

The Best Editing Award sponsored by Erma and Jack Ruddell

"FEELINGS" by Carroll Lam

"TOGETHER ON THE REEF" by Jean Slosberg

Best Cinematography "THE CRACKED POT" by James (Jim) Beach

Best Nature Entry "BEACH RICH? FISH POOR!" by Art Nelson

Best Foreign Entry "DOSE OF FAULTS" by Stoke Cine and Video Society

Best Documentary "MEALS ON WHEELS" by Roger Garretson

Best Club Production "DOSE OF FAULTS" by Stoke Cine and Video Society

### **CLASS B (Independent)**

#### **FIRST PLACE**

"THE SET STALKERS" BY John Velez, Mike Papadopoulos, Bill Almeida, Sea Bright, NJ



# AMERICAN MOTION PICTURE SOCIETY CINE / VIDEO COMPETITION

SEPTEMBER, 1999

## ENTRIES AND AWARDS LIST

ENTRY	NAME	STATE	TITLE	AWARD
1	Denis Kirwan	California	In Search of Wilderness	
2	Denis Kirwan	California	Hungry Divers	
3	Michael Toolan Roche	Pennsylvania	How I Learned to Love My Hand	
4	Eva Haataja	Alberta, Canada	Primary Suspect	
5	Margaret Chamberlain	Brit. Col., Canada	Remote-less	
6	Jack Somers	California	Out of Context	10 Best
7	Ephraim Horowitz	New York	Track Record	
8	Dave Cocklry	Ohio	Aliens in the Attic	10 B, Story
9	Christopher Rachfal	Pennsylvania	Restoration of Easton's Bachman Tavern	
10	Jeffrey Mullen	Pennsylvania	Monster Hunters, Inc.	
11	Patricia Morgan	California	Angelo's Message	
12	Darren VanderVort	Washington	The Usual Idiots	
13	Jack Somers	California	Behind the Glass	
14	Lee Prescott	Gloucester, England	The Magic Skate Board	10 Best
15	Carol Profy	Florida	A La Carte	
16	Ephraim Horowitz	New York	Movies I Never Made	
17	Carroll Lam	Arizona	The Thrills and Beauty of Bongani	
18	Carroll Lam	Arizona	Some Moments in Time	
19	Carroll Lam	Arizona	The Future is Now!	
20	Carroll Lam	Arizona	Feelings	2nd, Ed (Tie)
21	Art Nelson	New Jersey	Beach Rich? Fish Poor!	10B, Nature
22	Mike Rock Boyd	California	The New Silence	
23	John G. Velez	New Jersey	The Set Stalkers	Independant
24	Bill/Mary Ann Leeder	Illinois	Home of the Ephesians	
25	Wallace Shaw	Florida	Fun With Chroma Key	
26	Wallace Shaw	Florida	From Cloud Nine to Ground Zero	
27	Bob Makara	Michigan	The Wall	
28	G.W. Turk	Missouri	Spirit of the Sea	
29	G.W. Turk	Missouri	Feathers and Fins	
30	Howard Lindenmeyer	California	Aquarium	
31	Stoke Cine/Video	Newcastle, England	Dose of Faults	10B, Club, For
32	Stoke Cine/Video	Newcastle, England	Father's Christmas	
33	Jean Slosberg	Florida	Together on the Reef	3rd, Ed (Tie)
34	James Beach	California	Ketchikan's Misty Fjords	
35	James Beach	California	The Cracked Pot	1st, 3 More
36	Roger Garretson	California	Meals on Wheels	10B, Doc
37	Alan Simmons	Mississippi	Hard Rock Zombie	
38	Unknown Artists	Texas	Kennedy Park	10 Best
39	Stan Whatsitt	California	Dream of Eden	
40	Oskar/Daniela Siebert	Sinzing, Germany	In the Name of the Law	
41	Les Sholes	North Dakota	Cardio-Fallangies	
42	Ben Jenkins	Texas	The Plans for Eden	